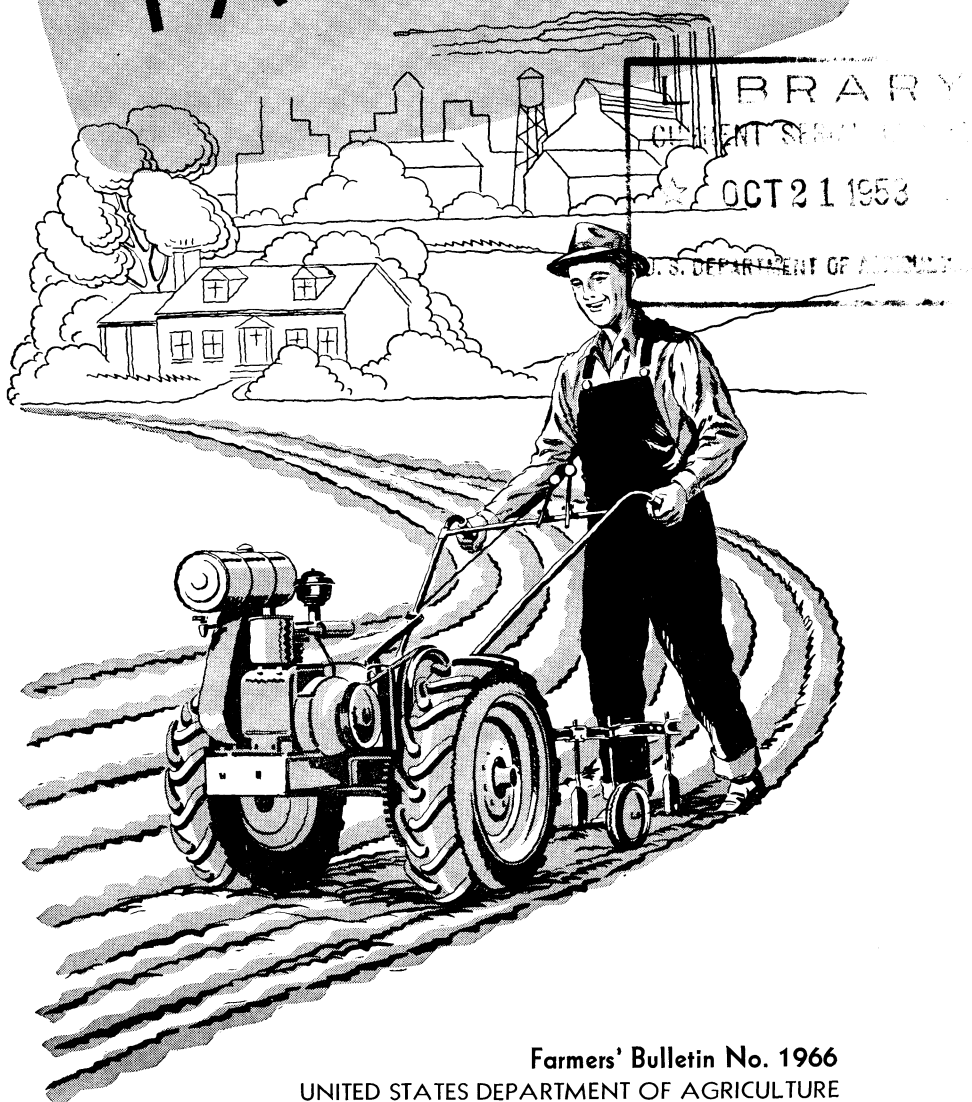


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PART-TIME FARMING



Farmers' Bulletin No. 1966
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

This bulletin undertakes to answer the questions that are asked most frequently by people who plan to take up part-time farming. As you read the bulletin, questions not answered in it will probably come to mind. You may want to know more about farming in a certain area, or more regarding certain farm specialties. If you are actively interested in buying and operating a part-time farm, you will have many questions of a local character that a general bulletin cannot cover. Finally, after you get started on your farm, you will probably run into problems that you would like help in meeting.

You can get reliable help from several sources, some of which you will probably find in your own community. Your own county agricultural agent and home demonstration agent, who have their offices in your county seat, gladly serve all the farm families. If your high school has a vocational agriculture department, the teacher's office is probably in your high school building. Your own State agricultural college has a staff of specialists in all the important fields of agriculture and home economics to help you. In addition to all these local and State sources of information, the facilities of the United States Department of Agriculture are at your service.

PART-TIME FARMING

By ORLIN J. SCOVILLE, *agricultural economist, Bureau of Agricultural Economics* and
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A PART-TIME FARMER lives with his family on a small farm, but he gets a big part of his income from sources other than his farm.

Many people who live in the country but work full time in the city have a garden or keep some chickens. These people really are rural residents rather than part-time farmers. But the line between the two is not sharp.

PART-TIME FARMERS

In 1950, this country had about two-thirds of a million "part-time" farmers. Another million "residential" farmers did a little farming for income. Together, these two groups occupied a third of all farms counted by the Census in 1950.² The dot map shows where the part-time and residential farmers were in 1950. You will find some in every State. Most of them are

near big cities and in industrial regions.

Many part-time farmers work for other farmers. The others find work in nearly all kinds of industries, trades, and professions.

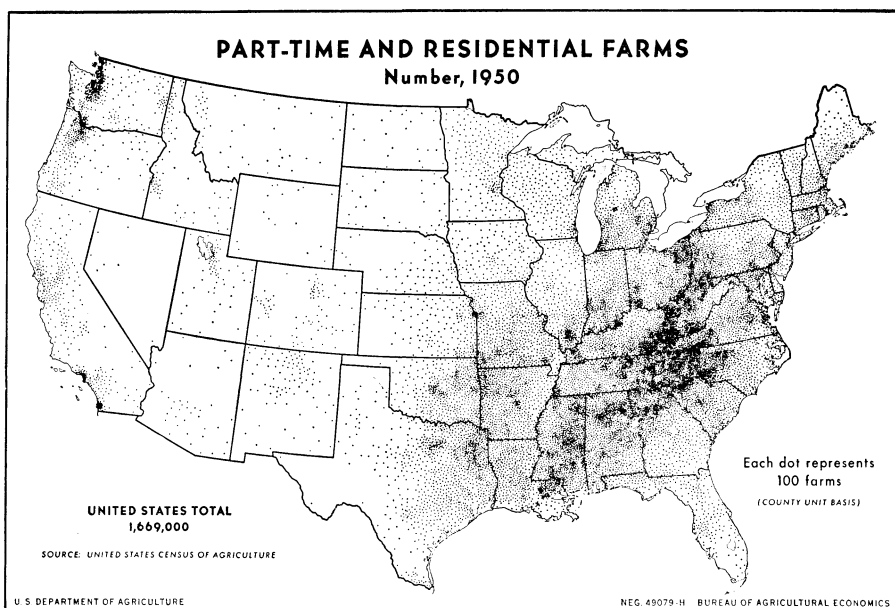
Coal miners and people who work in canning or packing plants have slack periods at seasons when their farms need most attention. Rural mail carriers often have extra time for farm work. And so do drivers of school buses and milk trucks. Part-time farmers in wooded areas find jobs in the forests at certain times of the year. Some part-time farmers run country stores and filling stations. Others are carpenters or mechanics. Teachers, ministers, veterinarians, and men in public offices often do a little farming on the side.

People who have retired and live on annuities or pensions often take up part-time farming. Those who are partly disabled can plan a farm program that fits their health and ability. Some ailments are helped by outdoor farm work.

Before you decide to become a part-time farmer, work out your own answers to the following questions:

¹ Jackson V. McElveen, agricultural economist, assisted in this version. Earl H. Bell, social scientist, was co-author with Orlin J. Scoville of the original F. B. 1966, *Part-Time Farming*.

² For details of the Census classification of farms, see the 1950 United States Census of Agriculture.



The location of part-time and residential farms is shown on this map. Many are concentrated in the industrial areas, and in the vicinity of the larger cities.

How much income do I need to support my family?

How much of this income can I expect from the farm?

How much time will my family be able to give to the farm?

At what seasons can we take this time?

What crops should be grown and what livestock kept? How much land will I need?

Will the farm be convenient to my job or will I have to change jobs?

Is steady work to be had within driving distance?

Does my family realize what each of us must do for success in the venture?

Face up to these questions. Your answers will have a lot to do with your chances of success.

Unless you have farmed before, you will have to start living a new way. If you make the wrong decision you will be unhappy, and your work will be drudgery. Also, your returns won't be up to expectation, for plants and animals thrive

best under happy owners who give them watchful care. It may be costly to change your mind about it after you've bought. Before deciding, weigh the pros and cons carefully.

PART-TIME FARMS LOCATION

When you start to decide on a location for a part-time farm consider these points:

CHANCES FOR OTHER WORK.—Many people have been sorry they took up part-time farming because they settled in the wrong communities. Either they could not find enough work off their farms, or not enough of the kind that fitted in with their farming programs. Don't make that mistake.

MARKETS.—If you grow anything to sell, you will need markets nearby. If you plan to sell fresh vegetables or whole milk, for example, you should be close to a town or city.

TRANSPORTATION.—The time you must spend traveling to and from other work and to and from market is time lost from farm work. And this travel costs you money. If your farm is too far from other work and from markets, cost of travel may offset your earnings. Needless to say, your farm should be on an all-weather road.

SELECTING A FARM

After you find a good locality, choose your farm with great care. It is to be your home as well as the source of part of your income. But your farm will not be your only source of income, so make sure that running it will not stand in the way of other work. Here are a few things to consider before you select a part-time farm:

SIZE.—Is the farm large enough to bring in the income you expect? And not too large for you and your family to keep up, along with your other work?

The acreage you need depends on how much and what kind of farming you plan to do. If it's only to raise fruits and vegetables for home use, half an acre or so of good land should be enough. On a plot this size you could keep a small flock of chickens. But your feed for the chickens could not be raised on so small a place.

From table 1, you can figure out about how much good land you will need to produce feed for your livestock. These figures are based on yields of 2 tons an acre for hay, and 40 bushels an acre for corn.

FITTING THE LAND TO YOUR USE.—Is the land suited to the things you plan to raise? You should get expert advice on this. Many crops are choosy. Soil type, drainage, or slope can make the difference between good crops and poor ones. Small areas that aren't right for a certain crop often lie next to areas

that are well suited to that crop. The county agricultural agent or other local specialists can help you to make the right choice.

FACILITIES.—Are water and other facilities available? Water mains, sewers, and gas and electric lines may not be right at your door. Getting these may cost you more than you expect. You may have to provide some of them yourself, or get along without them.

Table 1.—Acreage needed to produce feed for livestock

Item	Acreage		
	Pasture	Hay	Grain
Livestock:			
25 hens and 40 chickens-----			1 $\frac{1}{4}$
1 cow-----	1	1	$\frac{3}{4}$
3 pigs (for 6 months)-----	1	-----	1
1 horse-----	1	1	1

NEIGHBORHOOD.—Is the neighborhood the kind where your family will like to live? Are the houses nearby attractive and well kept? There are rural as well as urban slums. Few rural areas are protected by zoning. A tavern, filling station, junk yard, rendering plant, or some other business may go up near enough to your new home to hurt its value.

PRICE.—When you buy a farm, take care to pay only what it's worth. Its value will depend partly upon what you can raise on it, and partly upon its value as a place to live. The farm is bound to cost more per acre than one of similar quality that is farther from town.

Decide first what the place is worth to you and your family as a home in comparison with what it would cost to live in town. Take into account the differences between

city and county taxes, insurance, and utility rates, on the one hand, and the added cost of travel to work on the other.

In some localities, country schools are not as good as city schools. Fire protection, gas, sewage systems, and other facilities may not be available.

All these things must be considered when placing a value on your country residence.

What you should pay for the farm, over and above its value as a home, will depend on the earnings you expect from the farm. One way to estimate its value is to set up a plan for operating the farm.

First, list the kinds and quantities of the different things that the farm can be expected to produce in an average year, both for home use and for sale. Then estimate the value of the products at normal prices. The total will be the probable *gross income* from farming. Now subtract the total of your estimated annual farming expenditures. The difference between gross income and expenditures is *net* farm income. Include as expenditures an allowance for depreciation of farm buildings and equipment. Also count in as expense a charge for the labor to be done by the family. It may be hard to decide what this labor is worth, but charge something for it. Otherwise, you may pay too much for the farm, and wind up getting nothing for your labor.

Let's say, for example, that your figures showed your net farm income would be \$100 a year. That amount is 5 percent of \$2,000. So \$2,000 would be about the value of the place to you in terms of its earnings, capitalized at 5 percent. In other words, if you invest \$2,000 in land as an income source, you should expect a return of at least \$100 a year, or about 5 percent on your money.

Next, in order to get the total

value of the part-time farm, add the value of the place as a home to its value as an income source. Thus, if the home value of the farm above were set at \$5,000, its total value would be about \$7,000.

A careful record of farm income and expenses will show your yearly profit or loss. It also will help show you the value of your farm. The following work sheet may be used for this purpose (crops fed on the farm not to be included).

If you are not well acquainted with the area where you wish to locate, or if you are not experienced enough in farming to make such a calculation, usually you would do better to rent a place for a year or so before buying.

LABOR REQUIRED

How much work you will have to do on your part-time farm will vary with the income you expect from it.

If you plan only to provide enough fruits and vegetables, and perhaps milk, for the family, not much labor will be required. Many families have enough spare time in mornings, evenings, and weekends to take care of a good-sized garden and preserve some of the produce.

A large garden properly cared for will yield enough—fresh for summer use and preserved for winter use—to add to your income the equivalent of \$100 to \$300 a year, depending on the size of the family.

The work you put on your garden probably will return less per hour than a regular job. If you include in the cost of the produce the value of your labor at the rates paid by an employer, you probably will find that the home-grown food costs more than that bought at a retail market. But enjoyment in the work makes gardening partly a recreation rather than a chore, and no fruit or vegetable bought away from the farm can equal the home-grown product in freshness.

WORK SHEET

1. Income from farm production for sale and home use:

<i>Crop or livestock</i>	<i>Units produced</i>	<i>Price per unit (dollars)</i>	<i>Income (dollars)</i>
- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
Total income	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -

2. Expenses of farm production:

Hired labor	Equipment repairs and replacements
Seed	Livestock replacements
Feed	Building repairs and replacements ¹
Fertilizer	Taxes and insurance ¹
Water	Depreciation ¹
Fuel	Miscellaneous

Total farm expenses

3. Returns minus expenses

4. Value of own and family labor @ _____ per hour

5. Returns on farming investment (3) - (4) -----

6. Value of property for farming @ ----- percent

7. Value of property as a home_____

8. Total value of property_____

1 Include only the part that you estimate should be

¹ Include only the part that you estimate should be

¹ Include only the part that you estimate should be charged against farming activities.

If you have a steady year-round job you cannot expect to grow much beyond what your family uses, unless other members of the family do a good deal of the work or you hire help. As a rule, part-time farmers hire little labor.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

How much machinery and power you will need depends on what you plan to raise, the size of your farm, and how much work you expect to pay others to do for you. Production for home use is about all you can do with hand tools. Even for that you may want to hire the plowing.

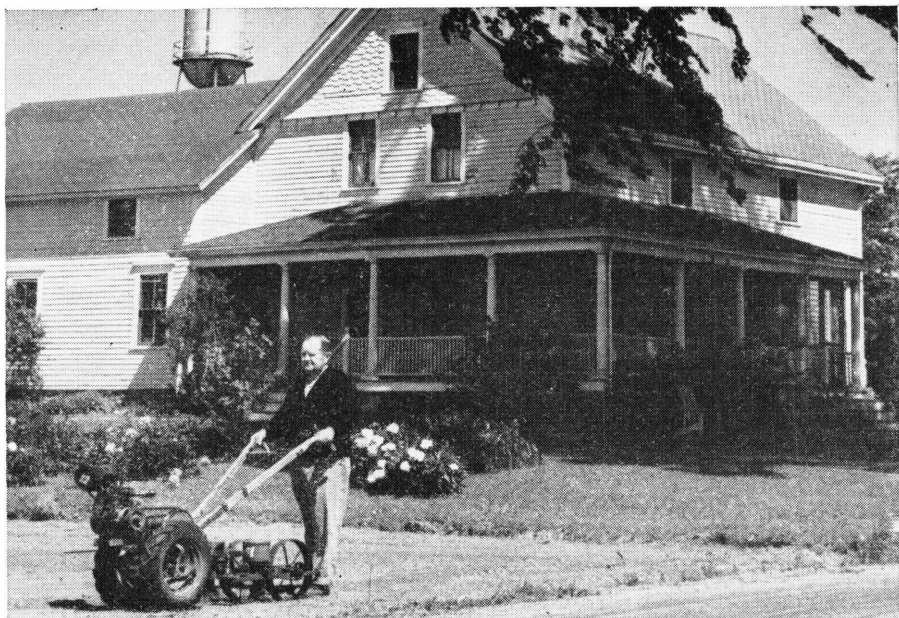
Some kind of power is needed for plowing, harrowing, disking, and cultivating larger plantings. If you have a half acre or more you may want to buy a small 2-wheel garden tractor; based on 1953 prices, this would cost, new, from \$150 to \$300. Because of their light weight, these tractors are not entirely satisfactory for plowing. You may still have to hire plowing done, especially on the heavier soils.

A horse costs less than a tractor, but it requires the feed from 3 or 4 acres of cropland. To make a horse pay out, you will need around 15 to 20 acres of good cropland. Now and then a part-time farmer can use his horse in work off the farm for pay. It might be profitable to keep one on a small acreage for such work.

In addition to equipment—plows, harrows, wagons—used for all crops, special kinds are needed for certain crops.

Cost of power and machinery is often a serious problem to the small-scale farmer. As the number of acres goes down the per acre cost of the machinery goes up.

Be careful not to tie up too much money in machinery. Find out whether you can hire some of the work done. If a piece of work calls for expensive and specialized machinery, such as spray rigs, combines, and binders, it is better to pay somebody to do it. Or you may be able to share the cost and upkeep of some of the larger pieces of machinery with a nearby neighbor. Most of the equipment on a



AAA-18971

The two-wheel motor-driven tractor does many light jobs on the farm.

small farm is used only a few days each year, and you do not have to have the most up-to-date machinery. You can keep your investment down by buying good second-hand machinery.

PRODUCTION FOR HOME USE

In deciding on the crops to be grown for home use, consider first the vegetables and small fruits. Half to three-fourths of an acre of good land will grow nearly all the vegetables and small fruits needed the year round by a family of five. For a garden of this size you will need a few hand tools, a sprayer, a duster, a wheel hoe, and for added convenience, a wheelbarrow. The annual cash cost of such a garden, at 1953 prices, would be from \$30 to \$80. This includes the cost of having the plot plowed and buying the seeds, plants, fertilizer, sprays, and dusts.

A few fruit trees make a welcome addition to the home food supply, but the trees must be well tended. They require pruning, cultivating, fertilizing, and spraying. Spraying equipment is needed unless the spraying service is hired. About 10 bearing trees of different kinds will supply plenty of fruit for the average family. But if you don't intend to take good care of fruit trees, don't plant them.

A part-time farmer may have a woodlot from which he obtains posts and firewood.

Many part-time farmers produce eggs, milk, and even meat for home use. You may have enough spare time to care for some chickens or rabbits, and possibly a hog and a milk cow or a goat or two, in addition to the garden. All livestock requires regular care every day of the year. Livestock cannot be neglected. You can put off garden work until tomorrow and probably

not lose much by the delay. But with livestock you must follow a regular schedule. Departure from it may bring a sharp decline in production or actual loss of animals. Give up the idea of keeping animals if you can't tie yourself down, or can't be at home at regular times every day.

About a dozen hens, if well cared for, provide from 90 to 110 dozen eggs a year—enough for a family of five. Hens require little ground. A small poultry house can be built from materials that cost from \$50 to \$100. In addition to kitchen scraps, hens need mash and grain at the rate of some 85 pounds a bird, a year. This much mash and grain would cost around \$4 to \$5 at 1953 prices—\$48 to \$60 a year for a dozen hens.

Some part-time farmers keep hogs for butchering. But hogs are not well suited to small places. Many communities prohibit keeping them in thickly settled areas. In any case, they should be kept some distance from the house.

One or two hogs can supply most of the meat and cooking fat needed for a family of five. Many families would not want this much pork. A couple of weanling pigs bought in the spring will be large enough to butcher in late fall or early winter. When fat hogs are selling for \$16 a hundred pounds, you should be able to buy weanling pigs for \$8 to \$12 each. Equipment needs are a small pen, a rude shelter, and a trough.

You can feed your pigs kitchen scraps, supplemented by 600 to 1,000 pounds of grain, costing from \$15 to \$35. With half or a quarter acre of good pasture, the feed bill can be cut by 10 to 20 percent. Whether to "feed out" a pig depends on the price of pork compared with the price of grain.

Slaughtering and dressing a hog and curing the meat call for skill

and extra labor. Many part-time farmers hire a local butcher to do this work.

With good care, a milk cow should give around 2,500 quarts of milk a year. This would provide a family of five with plenty of milk for all but 2 months, and with butter too, for all but 4 months of the year. Cows of this quality cost from \$150 to \$350 each at 1953 prices. A cow needs 1 to 2 acres of pasture, about 2½ tons of hay a year, costing \$40 to \$80, and 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of grain, costing \$40 to \$90. Your cow must have good shelter, especially if your farm is in the North.

Milk goats need less space and feed than cows. A good doe gives around 2 quarts of milk a day for 7 to 10 months each year, but the number of months you can milk a goat varies a good deal. During winter a doe eats each day about 2 or 3 pounds of hay and 1 to 2 pounds of grain. During the summer she needs a little less grain—perhaps 1 to 1½ pounds a day—and can be tethered out on a grassy plot. She will relish such extras as beet tops, bean and pea vines, sweet corn stover, and other garden truck.

A good many part-time farmers raise domestic rabbits. A buck and three or four does will produce enough young rabbits to supply as much rabbit meat as a family of five will want. Rabbits require little space, homemade shelter, and small quantities of feed. They need good-quality hay, some green or juicy food, and a grain ration. Their hutches should be cleaned daily and disinfected once or twice a week.

PRODUCTION FOR MARKET

If you want to add to your regular income with cash from your farm, you may be able to grow one or more crops for sale. Much depends on how much time you can put in and whether you have suitable land at



S-17082

The garden on the part-time farm requires care throughout the season—



S-17090

But it provides fresh vegetables for the family table—



S-17083

With enough extra for preservation for winter use—



S-11471

And perhaps enough for sale at a local farmers' market.



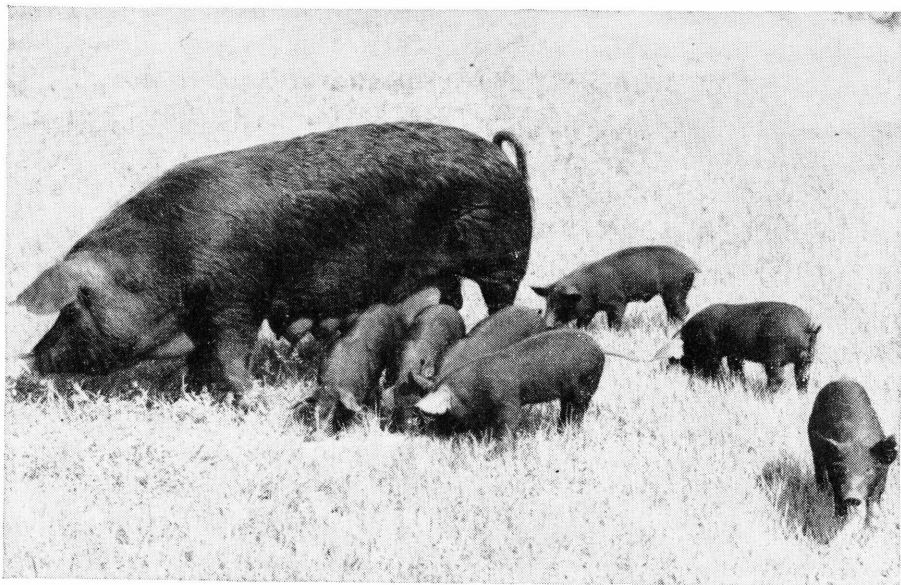
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The part-time farm flock may be small—perhaps only 50 chickens to provide eggs and meat for the family table, and much of the necessary equipment can be made at home.



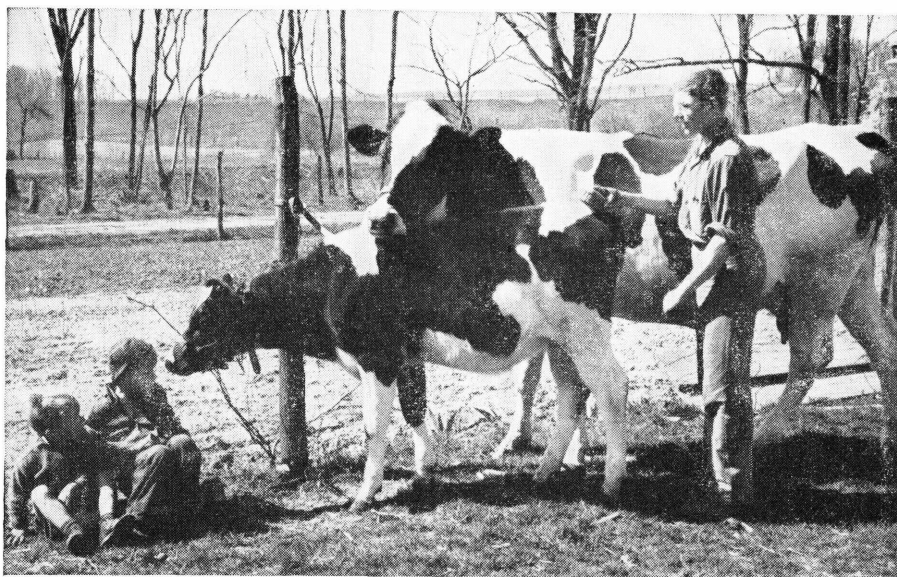
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Or it may be a large-scale enterprise to produce eggs for the market.



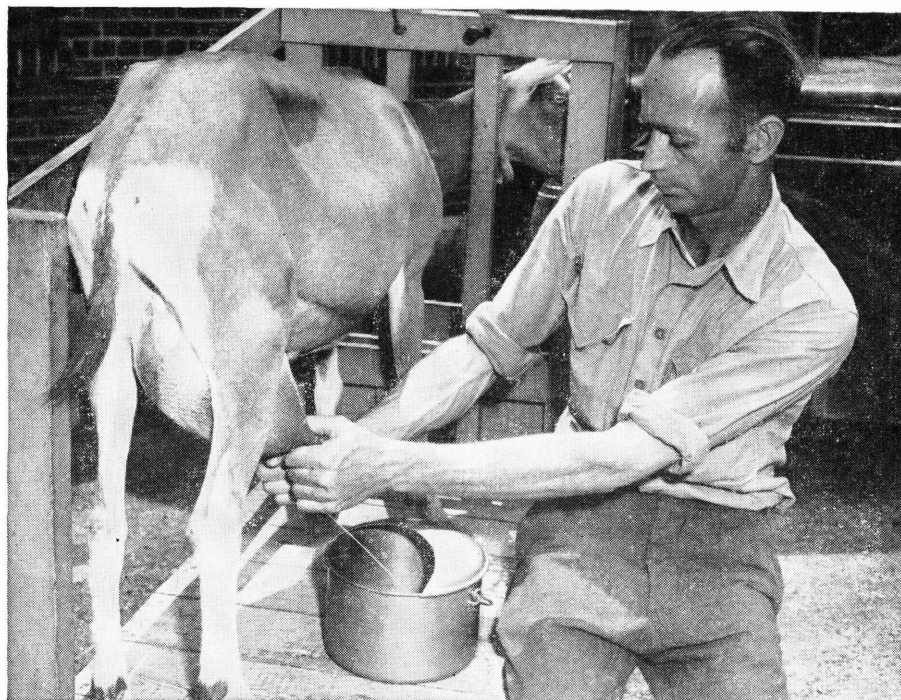
N-9760

On large part-time farms a sow will pay her way. On smaller places it is often better to buy and fatten a pig.



S-9047

Dairy cows provide milk for many farmers—for home use and also for sale.



N-8528

Goats provide milk on some farms, too.



S-13112

Raising rabbits is a popular project with farm boys.

reasonable cost. What to produce commercially also depends on how much labor you can expect from the family and how it can be spread out during the year.

As an aid in estimating your labor supply, list the months of the year. Place after each month the number of hours the family can be expected to devote to the work (table 2). Ask yourself, "How many hours will my wife and children be able and willing to devote to the task each month?" You may want to include your own regular vacation period, if you have one. You will be wise not to include all your family's free time—only what the various members of it are willing to use for farm work.

With this picture of the time available for the work, you can select crops that can be grown by your family's labor.

VEGETABLES, FRUITS, NUTS

Growing vegetables, fruits, and nuts for the market fits in well with part-time farming. With favorable weather and prices, acre yields and returns are high. On small places much of the work can be done by the family. But tree fruits and nuts have some disadvantages. Production is risky and complete crop failure isn't unusual. Cash costs for care of tree fruits and nuts are higher than those of most other crops. The cost of machinery for spraying and other jobs may be too great for a part-time farmer to bear. However, you may be able to hire part of the work on a custom basis.

In deciding what to grow for sale, first learn what crops are adapted to your locality and to the soils on your farm. Unless you are familiar with these crops, consult an experienced

TABLE 2.—*Approximate amount of labor needed for selected small-scale enterprises in the East Central States, by months*

Month	Labor required for—						
	Well-diver- sified garden, prepared with horse or tractor power (1 acre)	Field corn, cut, shocked, husked by hand (10 acres)	Hay (10 acres)	Milk cow (1) ¹	Laying hens (25 to 50)	Pigs (3)	Bees (40 to 60 colonies)
	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hours</i>
January.....				20	12		
February.....				20	12		
March.....	45	30		20	12		
April.....	100	40		20	12	12	20
May.....	100	70		20	12	12	10
June.....	45	50	80	20	12	12	15
July.....	30	15	10	10	12	12	20
August.....	35			10	12	12	80
September.....	30	60	70	25	12	12	20
October.....	30	130	40	20	12		60
November.....		65		20	12		
December.....		20		20	12		
Total.....	415	480	200	225	144	72	225

¹ Shift in time of freshening would shift figures.

local farmer, your county agricultural agent, the vocational agriculture teacher, or your State agricultural college. Be sure of this especially if you plan to raise crops that are not commonly grown commercially in your area. You may grow many crops that you can justify for family use but not for commercial production.

It is not enough to be able to grow a crop. Since you want to sell your products, you will need to have markets or marketing facilities nearby. There are three possible outlets—the fresh market, packers and distributors, and processing plants.

The fresh market price is the highest. However, fresh market selling would take more of your time and the losses from spoilage may be higher.

Packers and distributors pay less but provide a fairly steady and reliable market, and selling to them does not take much time. Some buy the crop in the field and harvest it.

Processing plants pay least but by selling to them you are sure of a market. Many of them contract for the total crop at planting time, provide technical guidance, and make loans to cover the costs of seed and labor.

How good these three market outlets are depends on the locality and the kind of produce. The fresh market in towns and small cities can easily be oversupplied. Some localities do not have a packing or processing plant. And frequently a plant will handle only one or two crops.

LABOR REQUIRED.—Having determined the crops that are adapted

to your locality and for which you have markets or marketing facilities, one further step is needed. You should compare the labor requirements of these crops with the labor you can give to them. Base your choice of crops on this comparison, as the final step.

It's generally advisable to raise a small quantity of several crops rather than a large quantity of just one. Several crops will utilize your labor better than only one or two, for the time of cultivation and harvest varies with different crops. If one crop fails, there may still be income from others. Consider carefully before adding any crop that will require special equipment not needed for other crops.

LIVESTOCK

Care of livestock is work that requires knowledge and skill. Animals and poultry need suitable buildings and equipment and production risks with livestock are greater than those with crops. If a disease starts in a flock of chickens or among farm animals, you may lose your entire investment.

Part-time farmers generally find it pays them to buy a large part of their grain feed, especially on small places or on high-priced land near cities. Feed takes a good deal of land to raise. Part-time farmers generally find it more profitable to raise more chickens or other livestock than to raise feed for a smaller flock. Work out the answer to this question in the light of all the facts in your own case. Look particularly at the acreage and quality of land available to you and at the price of feed.

POULTRY.—Chickens lend themselves well to part-time farming. Not too much space is needed. The costs of the flock, the buildings, and the equipment are not prohibitive. The birds respond well to good care.



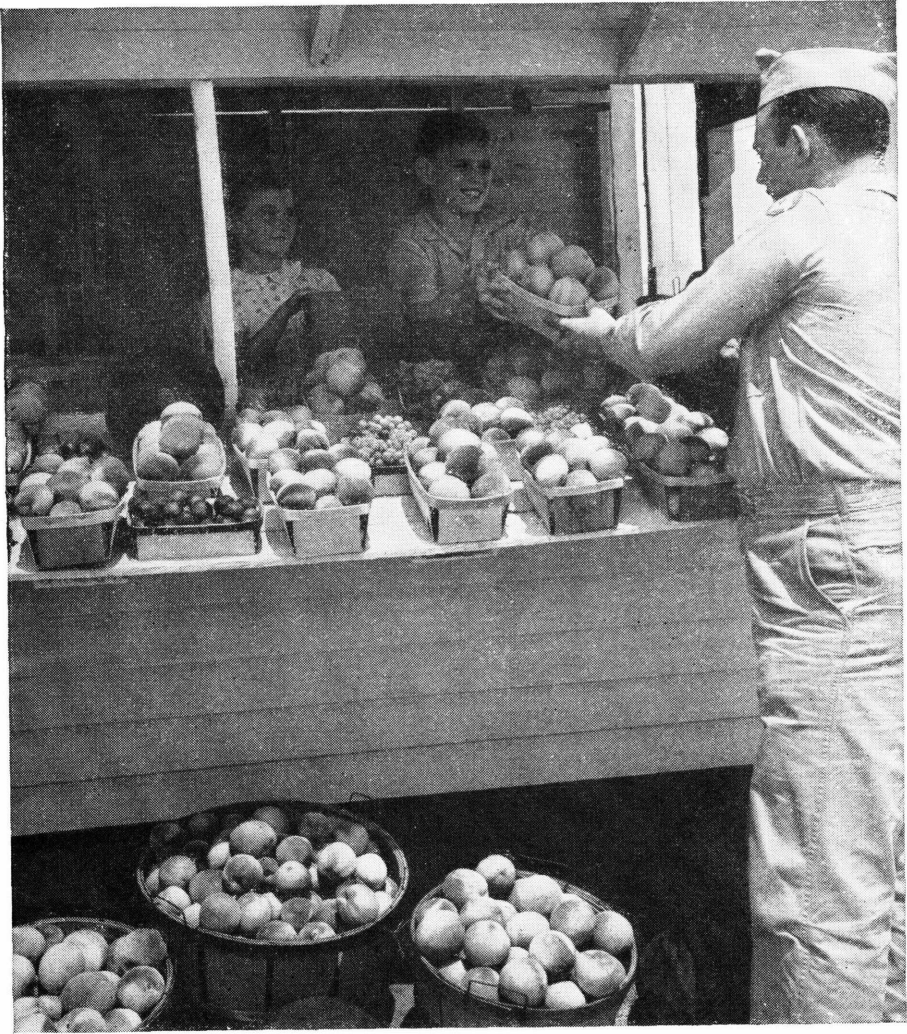
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Production of small fruits and berries does not require specialized equipment.



N-5171

An orchard requires very special—and expensive—care. Orchards given this care, however, yield crops of fine fruit.



N-6700

Roadside stands on well-traveled highways do a big business.

There are market outlets for eggs and live or dressed chickens almost everywhere. Whether you will make a profit, and how much, will vary with the ups and downs in feed costs and prices received. When prices are unfavorable, some of the hens can be sold or used on the table, and the enterprise can be built up again when conditions are more favorable.

COWS, HOGS, SHEEP, AND GOATS.—These animals are not as good as other livestock for commercial production on very small farms. However, they may have possibilities on larger part-time farms. All these animals require a fairly large investment. You will need considerable acreage for milk cows and sheep. Buying roughage usually is not economical. Good

milk cows require sturdy shelter. Quite a lot of equipment is needed in handling milk, particularly if it is sold. Usually strict sanitary requirements must be met. Sometimes the milkhouse has to be separate from the stable.

Another thing to consider if you plan to milk cows—you must have land suitable for pasture or some highly improved pasture to get low-cost production. And if you go into dairying on a commercial scale, plan to devote a good deal of time to it.

Milk goats require less space, pasture, and feed than cows. However, in many localities it is hard to find a good market for goat's milk.

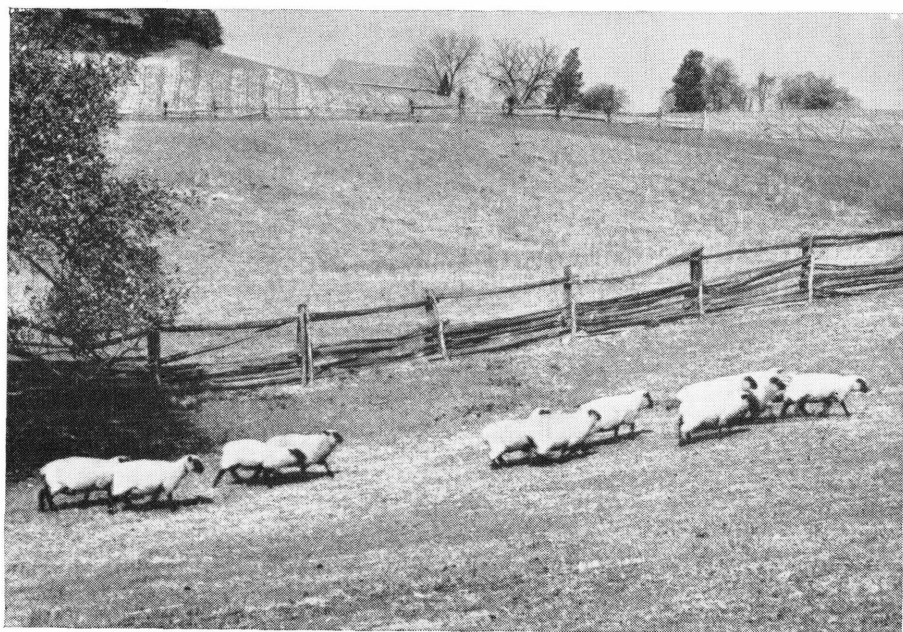
RABBITS.—On some part-time farms rabbits are kept for income from the sale of furs, breeding stock, or meat. Beginning with two or three does and a buck, the size of the enterprise can be built up quickly by saving a part of the natural increase. If you intend to

get income from a rabbit enterprise, you must be thoroughly familiar with the raising of rabbits and know what the market opportunities are.

FOREST PRODUCTS

Where the soil is better for forestry than for agriculture, forest products, either alone or with other products, may offer a good chance for part-time farming. The products vary with the locality. For the country as a whole, the principal products from farm woods, in the order of their value, are fuelwood, sawlogs, veneer logs, posts, pulpwoods, crossties, and poles and piling. Products important in some parts of the country are Christmas trees and greens, nuts and berries, turpentine, maple sirup and sugar, cascara bark, rhododendron, azalea, laurel, and other wild shrubs.

If you are interested in forest products, consider the kind and extent of the woodland available. Note what products might be ob-



Sheep may do well on land too steep or too stony for crops.

tained, and the varieties and condition of the trees. Carefully consider whether the area is desirable for forestry, and whether ready markets are available. After that, you will be in position to decide whether forestry will pay you, and what types of forestry are best in your case. Establish a new woodlot only after careful study; it will bring no returns for years. Many of the products mentioned above are usually obtained from wild plants or trees. At normal prices these do not justify planting and cultivating.

Aside from putting to profitable use land that is hilly, rocky, or of low productivity, the forest enterprise has features that are especially attractive to a part-time farmer. The work schedule can often be adjusted to fit in with periods when off-farm work is slack. The harvesting of pulpwood, sawlogs, or veneer logs can be put off for several years without loss, as the trees will continue to grow and the ultimate harvest will be so much the larger. Woods can be treated something like a savings account that builds up with the years without requiring much attention and can be drawn upon in time of need.

The work required by the forestry enterprise will vary a great deal. As a general rule, farm woodlands can be more intensively managed than the average forest. Planting trees takes a good deal of time. The principal jobs in established farm forests are improvement cutting, thinning, and harvesting. This work can be done with the tools found on almost any part-time farm. A team or tractor would be needed in harvesting such products as fuelwood, posts, and logs. Unless you have a rather large truck, you may find it advisable to hire someone to haul your logs and pulpwood to market. You may also decide to hire some of the woods work done. You may sell stumpage, asking for

bids on the trees that are to be harvested and letting the buyer do the cutting and hauling. Naturally, your income from trees sold this way will be lower than it would be if you cut and haul them yourself. Generally the farmer who does this work himself receives a good return for his labor.

SPECIAL PRODUCTS

BEES.—Many part-time farmers keep bees. Successful beekeeping takes skill and work. Bees do not demand attention every day. However, beekeeping should not be tried if your other work will prevent proper care of the bees when they need it. Work with bees is not evenly distributed throughout the year. Most time is needed in the fall when the honey is harvested and the bees are made ready for the winter. Some attention through spring and summer is also needed.



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Farmers who get along well with bees can raise enough honey for home use, with some extra for sale.

Beekeeping can be started with a small investment and only a few colonies, and can be built up as the operator gains experience.

UNUSUAL ENTERPRISES.—Part-time farmers sometimes carry on several specialized enterprises that involve special problems.

It may be that the market for their products is limited. A farmer who raises animals for scientific experiments like guinea pigs and white rats often faces a limited market. Or the enterprise may require considerable capital, as with mushroom rooms and foxes. Among other unusual enterprises are raising muskrats, frogs, goldfish, and squabs; growing ginseng and other herbs; and raising flowers and bulbs.

In nearly all of these enterprises, the successful people have unusual skill and understanding of the business. A favorable location with respect to climate and markets is usually important. In several of the enterprises, risks from disease are high. None of these enterprises should be started without careful study of all the facts involved.

INCOME POSSIBILITIES

The income from your part-time farm will depend on how much labor and time you and your family put into it. If you do relatively little work, the income will be only a couple of hundred dollars a year. Even that might not be in cash, but in the amount saved in the food bill. On the other hand, by doing more work—meaning more production—you can increase this income. The possibilities vary with the size of farm and kinds of products grown.

DISADVANTAGES OF PART-TIME FARMING

CONFINING.—If you raise livestock, someone must be on the farm

every day. Even without livestock, you cannot leave the farm for long periods, especially during the growing season. Farming requires a regular routine; the owner cannot always do as he wishes on the spur of the moment. His life must be arranged to meet the demands of his crops and livestock. He must get up early and, at times, work late at night. Even a slight change in the work schedule may cut the production of the cow or the chickens.

HARD PHYSICAL LABOR. The work takes many hours of labor, frequently in hot sun or cold rain. Regardless of how well the work is planned, bad weather or unexpected setbacks mean extra work to catch up.

HIGH COSTS OF PRODUCTION.—Land near cities is higher in price than land equally good farther from town. Because part-time farmers buy supplies in small quantities, they generally pay higher prices for supplies than full-time farmers. It may not be profitable for a part-time farmer to own labor-saving machines. Unusual skill is necessary to get as high egg production per hen or as much milk per cow as can be obtained by a competent full-time farmer.

DISAPPOINTMENTS.—Production may fall far below expectations. Drought, hail, disease, and insects take their toll of crops. Sickness or loss of some of the livestock may cut deeply into the owner's earnings and even his capital.

JOBS CAN'T BE CHANGED READILY.—A man who is running a part-time farm will have many ties to hold him where he is. To leave may mean a loss of capital because it involves much more than loading the family's household goods on a moving van.

BURDEN IF MAIN JOB IS LOST.—Contrary to the usual idea, part-time farming actually may be an addi-

tional burden if you lose your main job. This may be true whether you own the farm or rent it. If you are renting, the rent must be paid. If you are an owner, chances to sell your farm will rise and fall with the chances for off-farm work in the same area. Producing enough to eat is not producing enough for security. Unless the place is free of mortgage, you will have to pay the interest and payments on principal, as well as taxes. When a man farms only to add to his main income, whether he keeps on farming will probably depend largely on whether his main source of income is reliable and steady.

ADVANTAGES OF PART-TIME FARMING

ENVIRONMENT.—A farm provides a wholesome and healthful environment for children. It gives them room to play and plenty of fresh air. The children can do chores adapted to their age and ability. Owning or caring for a calf, a pig, or some chickens develops in children a sense of responsibility for work. Fresh vegetables, fruits, and dairy products in abundance, and with a flavor unknown to those who get them from the market, are among the rewards of those who live on a farm.

SECURITY.—Part-time farming gives a measure of security if the regular job is lost, *provided* the farm is owned free of debt and furnishes enough income to meet fixed expenses and minimum living costs.

WORK DURING RETIREMENT YEARS.—Part-time farming has much to offer elderly or partially disabled people and those whose health requires some outside work or exercise. Income from the farm adds to their insurance, annuities, or social security benefits. The amount of work can be adjusted to their physical fitness.

PROFITABLE USE OF SPARE TIME.—A part-time farmer and his family can make profitable use of their spare time labor. It can provide work for the entire family, subject to planning and supervision by the family itself.

LOWER LIVING COSTS.—Generally, a family can live more cheaply in the country than in the city, without lowering the level of living.

RECREATIONAL VALUES.—The physical work on a farm is often considered recreational. A welcome change from the regular job, it acts as a physical conditioner for many white-collar workers.

PLEASURE OF FARM WORK AND LIFE.—Many people like farm life and farm work. To own a little farm of their own is a hope that many city people often express.

Part-time farming is not an effort to make a living completely from a farm that is too small to provide either full employment or an adequate income. The family that lives on a part-time farm gets part of its income from work off the farm or from annuities, pensions, or investments.

Nor is part-time farming just a way to make a little extra money. It is a way of life—a cooperative venture for the entire family. Before undertaking it, the family should answer the following questions:

1. Do we really want to live in the country?
2. How will part-time farming change our way of living and are we willing to make the changes?
3. Do we want to accept the routine of farm life?

If the family clearly understands what is required of part-time farming and can accept what is involved in this way of life, its members probably will be happy and successful in it.

This bulletin outlines some of the

considerations in starting such an enterprise and some of the crops that may be produced by a part-time farmer. Further details are given in the following publications, copies of which may be obtained by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

- G. 9. Suburban and Farm Vegetable Gardens.
- F. B. 1939. Home Storage of Vegetables and Fruits.
- F. B. 1800. Home-made Jellies, Jams, and Preserves.
- F. B. 1508. Poultry Keeping in Back Yards.
- F. B. 1652. Diseases and Parasites of Poultry. (In press.)
- F. B. 920. Milk Goats.
- F. B. 1753. Livestock for Small Farms.
- F. B. 1907. Equipment and Methods for Harvesting Farm Woodland Products.
- F. B. 1965. Planning the Farm for Profit and Stability.
- F. B. 1962. Useful Records for Family Farms.
- F. B. 1989. Managing the Small Forest.
- M. P. 652. Managing Farm Finances.
- Leaflet 299. Some Questions and Answers on Where and How to Get a Farm.

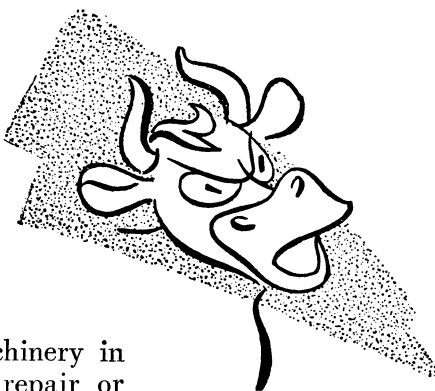
For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office
Washington 25, D. C. - Price 10 cents

Farm Accidents Each Year . . .



- Kill about 15,000 people.
- Injure or cripple about 11¼ million more.
- Cause loss of 17 million man-days of farm labor, or the services of 46,000 men working every day for a year.

Help Prevent Most of These Accidents!



- Keep tractors and other farm machinery in good repair. Equipment in bad repair or carelessly handled ranks first in killing or injuring farm people.
- Handle bulls and other farm animals carefully. They rank second in causing farm accidents and deaths.
- Use sharp-edged tools with caution—sickles, saws, corn knives, chisels, screwdrivers, axes.
- Take proper care in using, handling, and storing insecticides and other poisonous chemicals.
- Install, use, and repair electrical appliances and equipment properly.

*You can lessen the seriousness of many accidents by immediate and proper care. Keep a first aid kit handy and know how to use it.
Call a doctor.*